PONT Strategic Framework

Vision of PONT

Transboundary conservation areas are reconnected and sustained as important biodiversity hotspots where people live and work in harmony with nature

Mission of PONT

Conserving nature for a sustainable future through long-term partnerships and financing

Introduction

Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT) is a private, legally independent grant-making institution for sustainable conservation financing. PONT raises and invests funds to provide grants to government agencies (such as Protected Area Management Authorities) and Environmental Actors, such as NGOs, with a focus on conservation in the PONT Focus Region. A Conservation Trust Fund, such as PONT, often acts as an honest broker, enabling partnerships between government agencies and NGOs. Conservation Trust Fund support concentrates on financing, monitoring and verification, leaving the implementation to be done by the grantees. This implies that grantees are capable organisations fulfilling a minimum criterion and standard that ensure the effective and efficient implementation of conservation actions and the spending of funds. PONT cooperates with governments, local authorities, as well as other projects and donors in the PONT Focus Region to look for opportunities for the required matching funds, to obtain (cultivate) synergies and to avoid overlaps.

PONT promotes a partnership model to enable a more effective and equitable management of natural resources, which is reflected in its two distinct but complementary grant programmes. The first concerns Protected Areas Management Authorities and is focused on developing and operationalising their management plans. An indicative list of measures and actions identified in the current management plans for the eligible protected areas in the PONT Focus Region and that qualify for PONT co-financing is presented in Table 1 (see Pillar 1 below). The second concerns Environmental Actors which focuses on complementing the conservation actions by the Protected Area Management Authorities and facilitating community involvement in protected area governance and management. Partnerships between Protected Area Management Authorities and Environmental Actors are continuously facilitated and promoted to achieve synergies and to avoid overlaps. The focus of PONT is to finance conservation actions in existing and eligible protected areas that are part of larger transboundary conservation areas. Measures in ecological corridors are supported to improve the movements of certain species and the habitats they depend on and to increase the resilience in the wider landscape.

The Protected Area Management Authorities are supported with their operations and organisational development to make them more robust and capable of sourcing third party funding. Capacity and organisational development measures financed by PONT are identified through the annual participatory Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools (METT) assessments linked to the annual operational plans and budgets.

The Environmental Actors with a focus on conservation in the PONT Focus Region are supported with their operations and organisational development to make them more robust and capable of sourcing third-party funding. An indicative list of measures and actions to be implemented by the Environmental Actors in the PONT Focus Region and that are eligible for PONT co-financing is presented in Table 2 (see Pillar 2 below). Capacity and organisational development measures financed by PONT are identified through the regular participatory Civil Society Tracking Tool (CSTT) assessments linked to the strategic and operational plans and budgets.

People with Nature as an overarching principle

PONT recognises that long-term conservation success depends on mutually supportive relationships between people, institutions, and nature. PONT therefore promotes approaches in which local communities, protected area authorities, Environmental Actors, municipalities, researchers, and responsible businesses jointly understand, govern, restore, and benefit from healthy ecosystems. Conservation interventions should strengthen biodiversity, human well-being, social equity, local stewardship, and the capacity to adapt to environmental and socioeconomic change.

Within this approach, local people are not considered only as beneficiaries or stakeholders to be consulted. They are recognised as knowledge holders, co-designers, implementation partners, environmental stewards, innovators, and contributors to monitoring and adaptive management.

PONT-supported partnerships are therefore based on the following principles: (1) understand the local people–nature system, including ecological values, ecosystem-service dependence, local knowledge, power relations, risks, and benefit distribution; (2) co-design a shared local agreement on outcomes, roles, contributions, decision-making, and grievance handling; (3) test locally designed solutions; (4) consolidate practices that demonstrate ecological results and local value; (5) institutionalise responsibilities, skills, monitoring, and financing; and (6) transition, replicate, and learn.

Sustainability

PONT was created to ensure sustainable long-term financial flows for conservation. The need for institutions like PONT came about because of insufficient state funding, the ‘stop and go’ cycle created by project funding, and the recognition that maintaining investments was necessary if gains were not to be lost. Donors that wish to channel their funding via PONT should also commit to PONT’s primary mission of sustainability and understand why PONT refrains from becoming an implementing agency and accept certain levels of absorption capacity by the grantees.

Although the idea behind a Conservation Trust Fund is to be able to finance conservation actions in perpetuity, grantees should be prepared to become less dependent from PONT over time, about 15-20 years. Therefore, PONT continuously finances to a certain extent, organisational and capacity development of its grantees to strengthen their capacities (including fundraising). This includes the coaching and nurturing of young professionals in the nature conservation sector.

Sustainability should be assessed across five connected dimensions: ecological resilience; institutional resilience; community and partnership resilience; financial resilience; and the capacity to respond to climate and socioeconomic change. Reduced dependence on PONT should therefore be accompanied by the institutionalisation of successful practices, retention of skills and knowledge, diversified financing, clear local ownership, and realistic arrangements for maintaining essential conservation functions.

A grant will be considered sustainable not only when planned activities are completed, but when essential conservation functions and locally valued benefits are likely to continue.

PONT Environmental Social Management System

PONT is committed to maintaining an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) which complies with provisions of national legislation in Albania, Greece, and North Macedonia, PONT's own policies, and with international best practices and standards. PONT is committed to doing no social or environmental harm, actively seeking net environmental and social gains, respecting human rights, and the continual improvement of all PONT's operations and practices.

Actively seeking net environmental gains and respecting human rights means that PONT promotes fair and inclusive conservation outcomes. Grant monitoring will consider who receives conservation benefits, who bears restrictions or opportunity costs, whose knowledge is recognised, who influences decisions, and who has access to paid, technical, and leadership roles. Attention will be given to women, young people, persons with disabilities, economically vulnerable households, and groups whose livelihoods depend directly on natural resources.

PONT policies and procedures for administering grants and the ESMS are available on the PONT website. The PONT Grants Manual includes eligibility criteria and matching fund requirements. The ESMS Manual provides an overview of the PONT Grant Cycle indicating at which stages Environmental and Social Due Diligence and Screening are included.

Locally led grant design and stewardship

Grant applicants are required to explain how local actors participated in defining the problem and designing the response; what level of participation and decision-making influence is intended; how local and scientific knowledge will be combined; how conservation costs and benefits will be distributed; and how successful activities will continue after the grant. Small grants and community stewardship agreements should be used strategically to transfer responsibility, rather than only as mechanisms for delivering activities designed by larger organisations.

Pillar 1: PONT Strategic Framework for Protected Area Management Authorities[1]

PONT enables Protected Area Management Authorities to implement the formally approved management plans for the protected areas they manage through sustainable co-financing of operational costs. In cases where no valid management plan is in place for the protected area, the Supervisory Board of PONT may also approve a planning-grant to the relevant Protected Area Management Authority, provided that a formally approved management plan is submitted with the application for the follow-up grant.

PONT may support the mid-term review of the existing management plans and their updating, i.e., the development of a new management plan for the next 10-year period. This is preferably done by the Protected Area Management Authority staff themselves with, if needed, some external support to facilitate the process. The renewal of the follow-up management plans is quite often delayed. This might be because not all activities planned in the latest management plan have been implemented. PONT considers all management plans that have been officially approved by the competent authorities, to be valid until they are renewed or updated and formally approved. During this period PONT focuses its financing on regular operations and activities identified in the latest management plan (even if formally outdated) but will refrain from financing new investments or activities not included in the latest management plan.

Protected areas are the fundamental building blocks of conservation strategies in the PONT Focus Region. A key feature of PONT support to protected areas is to promote better governance and thereby to promote more effective management that will achieve the desired outcomes. Securing protected area managers with sufficient resources to achieve effective management of their areas is a prerequisite for creating improved conditions for species and ecosystems and for sustainable development of the local communities.

The widely accepted Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) framework, developed by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), identifies six elements of the protected area management cycle: context, planning, inputs, process, outputs, and outcomes (see the diagram below).

[1] The PONT support to legally mandated Protected Area Management Authorities will be extended to existing eligible protected areas with a basic staff, and infrastructure, adequate co-financing, and valid management plans with a focus on operational costs for key functions of the protected area, in line with the principles and rules set out in the PONT Grants Manual.

Figure 1. Management Planning cycle

The long-term co-financing from PONT enables the Protected Area Management Authorities in the PONT Focus Region to effectively integrate the long-term management planning with the annual or operational planning. To provide for transparent, evidence-based, and adaptive management, the Protected Area Management Authorities are required to follow the following three steps in identifying the operations and specific activities to be supported by PONT on an annual basis:

1. *Streamline annual cycles of reporting*. Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the management plans and operational plans for the protected areas is guided by a set of indicators identified in the plans. Draft reports on the activities implemented in the current year are ready by October and serve as an input into the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) assessment and the development of the operational plan for the subsequent year.

2. *Conduct METT Assessments*. METT assessments are an integral part of PONT's monitoring and evaluation system at both programme and individual grant level. Grantees managing protected areas are required to use METT to assess the impact of PONT's grants on management effectiveness and track progress over time. Based on biodiversity monitoring data and other information in the reports, the METT assessments help the protected area managers determine preferences among options in preparing the operational plan for the following year. A participatory approach in combination with a more in-depth and meticulous assessment based on evidence, as well as an extensive use of the columns "Comment/Explanation" and "Next Steps" in the Assessment Form, improves the objectiveness and the perceived benefits of the METT assessments. The participatory approach addressing relevant questions also enables protected area managers to interact and discuss the issues covered by METT with the key stakeholders while the use of facilitators in the process makes this interaction more effective and productive.

3. *Develop operational plans for the following year*. The Protected Area Management Authorities are required to use a Template developed by PONT to prepare annual operational plans and budgets that are part of their grant applications to PONT. These operational plans state the actions to be implemented each year to achieve the objectives set out in the management plan for the protected area concerned. While most of the actions are selected from among those identified in the management plans, additional actions arise from the METT assessments, by learning from experience, or in response to uncertainty and change. The operational plans integrate both recurrent (routine) activities and non-recurrent activities (projects) to ensure resources are adequately distributed across the different functional areas. The operational plans only include activities that are currently achievable with the existing staffing, technical and financial resources available, including the co-financing from PONT.

Based on the operational plans developed by the Protected Area Management Authorities, PONT supports the development and use of standard operational planning and reporting systems for the implementation of proprietary protected area programmes identified in the management plans. Standardised biodiversity monitoring systems are developed in which data are collected, analysed and shared to support habitat management, with an efficient division of what can be done by the protected area staff themselves, Environmental Actors, and local people and what to outsource to third parties. Enabling the protected area staff to increasingly use scientific data in managing the area must be included in the third-party contracts. The adherence to minimum *Natura 2000* requirements[2] will gain importance in the coming years.

An overview of the validity of the current, formally approved management plans for the eligible protected areas in the PONT Focus Region, as well as those in the process of formal approval is presented in Figure 2 below.

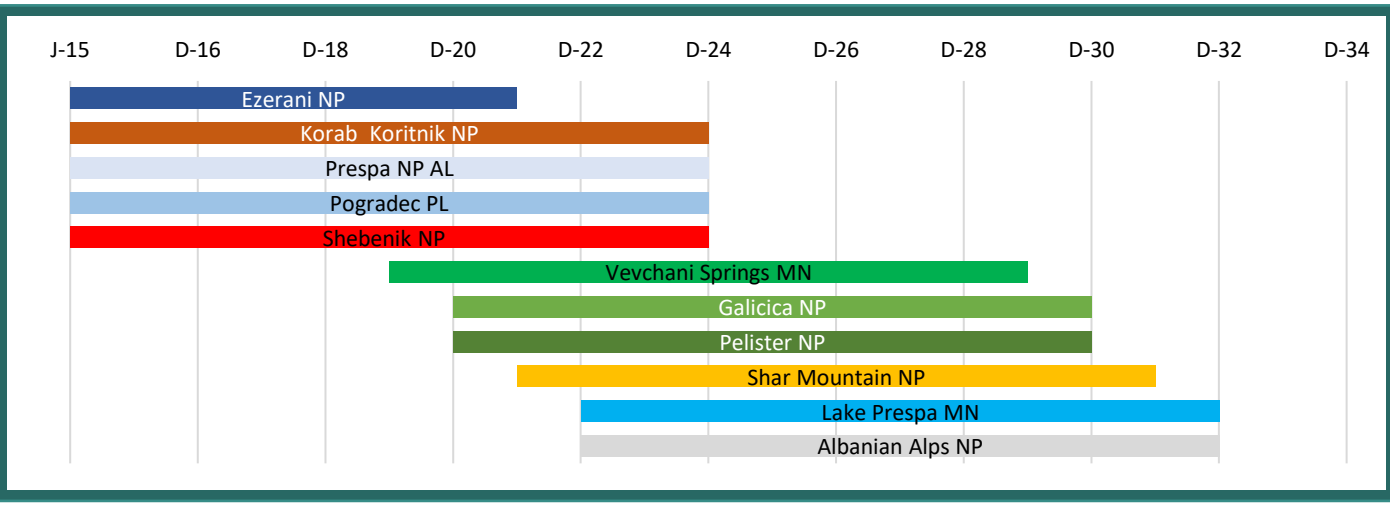


Figure 2. Overview of validity of existing management plans and those in the procedure of formal approval for the eligible protected areas in the PONT Focus Region.

[2] Full and effective implementation and enforcement of the EU Nature Directives is critical to *Natura 2000* management effectiveness. Examples of requirements are the establishment of conservation objectives (Article 4) and conservation measures (Article 6.1) under the Habitats Directive.

Indicative list of Activities identified in the Management Plans for the eligible Protected Areas in the PONT Focus Region[3]

Functional Areas and Programmes	Activities eligible for PONT co-financing (examples)	Activities not eligible for PONT co-financing (examples)
Resource management & protection		
Patrolling and Enforcement[4] Scientific/Applied Monitoring and Research Species and Habitat Management and Restoration	- Law enforcement on hunting: define the areas where the hunting ban should be applied (Korab-Koritnik Nature Park). - Control of the behaviour of park visitors (Galicica NP); - Monitoring of priority habitats from the EU Habitats Directive (Pelister NP); - Produced a detailed habitat map based on *Natura 2000* habitat classification (Pogradec PL); - Upgrading the Long-term Monitoring Programme of Biodiversity (Galicica NP); - Mapping of underground karst forms (Galicica NP); - Survey to complete the list of mammal species within the park (SHNP); - Identification of wildlife corridors (Korab-Koritnik Nature Park). - Restoration of the Rupa glacial lake (Pelister NP); - Registration of collectors' wild plants and fungi (Pelister NP); - Alien invasive species: *Ailanthus altissima* - eradicate the species everywhere where it grows (Prespa NP).	- Selection of (forest) certification system - FSC or PEFC and selection of a certification body (Pelister NP); - Preparation of new Special Plans for Cultivation and Protection of Forests for the Period 2023-2032 (Galicica NP); - Reforestation of degraded deciduous thermophilus forests (SHNP); - Reduce the use for firewood by substitution of biomass, supply more efficient heating systems in the houses and better insulation of houses (Prespa NP); - Plant fast growing woods to provide firewood as substitute for reduced harvesting from state forests (Prespa NP); - Apply ecological standards for agricultural production by avoiding harmful pesticides and artificial fertilizers (Prespa NP). - Prepare a revised general plan and budget for decontamination and clean-up of Memëlisht mining site (Pogradec PL).
Tourism & recreation		
Visitor Safety and Protection Recreation Fee Collection Visitor Education and Interpretation	- Sign/extend contracts with mountain rescue services (Pelister NP); - Managing the distribution of visitors in the park (Galicica NP); - Introduction of alternative sources of financing (entry fees for entry, parking, and stay in the park, ecosystem services (Pelister NP); - Evaluate the possibilities to introduce an entrance fee to the Protected Area (Korab-Koritnik Nature Park); - Leaflets and brochures on the values of the park and permitted and prohibited activities (Pelister NP);	

[3] The activities listed in the table are taken from the management plans for Prespa National Park (Prespa NP), Albania, Pelister National Park (Pelister NP), Galicica National Park (Galicica NP), Shebenik National Park (SHNP), Korab-Koritnik Nature Park and Pogradec Protected Landscape (Pogradec PL). The title of some of the activities have been edited for clarity and brevity. As per its charter, PONT financing focuses on sustainable uses of natural resources directly linked and compatible to protected areas such as nature-based tourism and non-timber forest products. Activities such as the promotion of agriculture, commercial fisheries or commercial forestry are not eligible for PONT co-financing. Sustainable development activities and investments in waste collection; supply of drinking water and wastewater treatment are also not eligible for PONT co-financing. PONT recognises the importance of other rural development activities and seeks to collaborate with other donors and projects supporting such activities.

[4] Procurement and maintenance of firearms are not eligible for PONT co-financing.

Functional Areas and Programmes	Activities eligible for PONT co-financing (examples)	Activities not eligible for PONT co-financing (examples)
	- Training of local people as nature guides in the park (Prespa NP); - Elaboration of a Park Tourism Guide, including a description of the main tourist sites, their location and relevance (both natural and cultural), accommodation and other facilities (SHNP).	
Environmental Education		
Formal Environmental Education Public Outreach and Information	- Support local NGOs and media on awareness raising activities (Pogradec PL); - Regular sharing of content and information related to the park on the website and on social media (Pelister NP); - Organization of workshops on various topics for different target groups (Galicica NP); - Development of a set of tourist info and promotional materials on different topics (Pelister NP); - Development of educational packages targeting different age groups (Galicica NP); - Education and awareness raising of local population and visitors about the special values of species (Prespa NP); - Development of educational and promotional programs (Korab-Koritnik Nature Park).	
Community development & outreach		
Stakeholder Engagement Sustainable Livelihoods & Training	- Involvement of local communities in the management of natural resources through the Council of Stakeholders (Pelister NP); - Assessment of the yield of the Ohrid tea (*Sideritis raeseri*) in the sustainable use zone (Galicica NP); - Implement a small grant programme for local communities in the park through the Environmental Forum (Galicica NP); - Encourage beekeeping, production of high quality honey, certification of such a product and its marketing (Korab-Koritnik Nature Park).	- Construction of appropriate faecal sewerage for the village of Malovishte (Pelister NP); - Provide economically and environmentally sustainable alternatives of heating and cooking energy sources to rural communities (SHNP); - Carry out an agronomic study and related value chain and market analysis for specific crop and livestock products, (SHNP); - Support farmers to reduce the use of foreign and replace with traditional livestock breeds as for example (Korab-Koritnik Nature Park).

Functional Areas and Programmes	Activities eligible for PONT co-financing (examples)	Activities not eligible for PONT co-financing (examples)
Facility operations & maintenance		
Maintenance of buildings, grounds, and utilities[5] Office and management equipment[6] Visitor infrastructure and facilities[6] Vehicles and boats[6]	- Maintenance of walking trails (Pelister NP, Galicica NP); - Provide information for visitors in a visitor centre (Prespa NP); - Provision of computer IT and GIS equipment, equipment for monitoring and fire protection, off-road vehicles, small measuring stations (Pelister NP); - Improve mobility and operation of the staff and rangers through procurement of basic equipment (vehicles, motorbikes, GPS, binoculars (Korab-Koritnik Nature Park).	- Build infrastructure in the Prespa NP to allow visitors to experience nature, such as info points, mark hiking trails, biking and riding trails, etc. (Prespa NP); - Complete the extension of the sewerage system in the area around Pogradec (Pogradec PL); - Construction of wastewater collection systems and treatment plants for selected villages (Prespa NP); - Opening of an info office in the centre of Bitola (Pelister NP); - Placement and operation of waste containers in the protected area along trails, near monuments, etc. (Korab-Koritnik Nature Park); - Implementation of specific measures to mitigate risks of landslides, flooding and soil erosion (SHNP); - Construction of parking lots within the protected area (Korab-Koritnik Nature Park); - Procurement of an electrical bus (Galicica NP).
Governance Management & administration		
Governance, General Management and Administration Financial Management and Administration Partnership Relations	- Establishment and support of local working groups (through the Environmental Forum) for discussion, coordination and cooperation in natural resource management (Galicica NP); - Introduction of payment for ecosystem services scheme (Pelister NP); - Restructuring of the internal organizational set-up (Pelister NP); - Preparation, regular updating and implementation of internal and external documents, rules and regulations (Galicica NP); - Competence development, institutionalization of collaborations and memberships (Galicica NP); - Establish cooperation with trans boundary PA administration “Sharr NP” in Kosovo and Mavrovo NP in North Macedonia. Prepare MoU for protected area and wildlife protection (Korab-Koritnik Nature Park).	

[5] New buildings, grounds and utilities not eligible for PONT co-financing

[6] Only items with a cost below €20,000 are eligible for PONT co-financing accept specialised vehicles for field operations which can be financed up to €35,000 per item.

Pillar 2: PONT Strategic Framework for Environmental Actors[7]

Grants to Environmental Actors are primarily intended for qualified not-for-profit organisations with a local presence in the PONT Focus Region and with a strategy in conservation, developing society, improving communities, and promoting citizen participation in conservation. PONT funding priorities for Environmental Actors are mainly focused on actions identified in the management plans for which the Protected Area Management Authorities lack capacity, as well as transboundary conservation activities and/or activities enhancing ecological connectivity. Applied research, with the involvement of protected area staff, directly focused on species or habitat management is also supported, but fundamental research is not.

National based NGOs may be supported in implementing conservation actions and other nature-based sustainable development actions covering more protected areas and along the ecological corridors[8] connecting the eligible protected areas in the PONT Focus Region. The priority actions in the wider landscape are related to the following crosscutting themes: monitoring and management of important habitats and species; good governance; building of partnerships (e.g., in nature-based tourism or the cultivation of Non-Timber Forest Products); climate change resilience; and transboundary cooperation. These actions are to be mainly addressed by national based NGOs in cooperation with international, regional and local partners. Sub-granting of small amounts by the lead partners to small businesses[9], local municipalities, local NGOs and community groups is encouraged and to be promoted. Sub-contracting by the lead partners to other organisations with specialised expertise is encouraged and to be promoted as well.

Local and national Environmental Actors, such as NGOs, operating in the PONT Focus Region, are screened on their thematic expertise and eligibility for PONT co-financing. Eligible Environmental Actors, such as NGOs, will be approached by PONT to apply through open or closed Calls for Proposals. Open Calls for Proposals will be advertised via the PONT website and social media channels. PONT will use the Strategic Framework for Environmental Actors to design and select the topics for each Call for Proposal including specific requirements and eligibility criteria. Topics are chosen where a need or gap is identified with the respective Protected Area Management Authorities or for topics covering more protected areas and along the ecological corridors.

[7] Environmental Actors (EAs) include non-governmental organizations, municipalities, scientific or academic institutions.

[8] The Environmental Actors are required to use a special Connectivity Template developed by PONT, which serves as the strategic backbone for interventions in key ecological corridors, to prepare annual operational plans and budgets that are part of their grant applications to PONT.

[9] According to PONT regulations the lead partner of a grant cannot be a for-profit organization and therefore businesses can only be supported indirectly and only for not-for-profit purposes such as greening their businesses. PONT is, however, fully aware of the importance of the involvement of the private sector to come to sustainable interventions and solutions.

Pillar 2: PONT Strategic Framework for Environmental Actors

Strategic Objective	Objective	Priority Activities to be Supported by PONT[10]	Indicators[11]
GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT, AND ADMINISTRATION **Strategic Objective 1: Promote the application of best practices and approaches to ensure equitable and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources in the PONT Focus Region**	Objective 1.1: Effective and equitable governance of protected areas enhances the ecological, economic, and social benefits they provide	1.1.1. Raise awareness among civil society and stakeholders of the role and purpose of the defined protected area governance structures and mechanisms (e.g., Management Committees, Stakeholder and Scientific Councils, Environment Fora, transboundary bodies, etc.). 1.1.2. Foster the active engagement of stakeholders to broaden social support for protected areas and thus improve protected area management. 1.1.3. Assist local communities and stakeholders to organise themselves and provide information and technical support to participate in decision-making regarding protected areas. 1.1.4. Support and facilitate the active participation of women, youth, vulnerable people (elderly, disabled etc.), and local communities in governance of protected areas at site and transboundary levels. 1.1.5. Promote learning and cross-fertilization of experience and encourage innovative governance arrangement for protected areas at site and transboundary levels. 1.1.6. Promote the establishment of processes and mechanisms to get feedback and identify, hear, and resolve complaints and disputes related to the governance or management of the protected areas.	1 Trends in METT Q22: "Is there co-operation with adjacent land and water users?" 2 Trends in METT Q24: "Do local communities, resident or near the protected area have input to management decisions?"
	Objective 1.2: Protected areas are managed effectively to protect the values for	1.2.1 Facilitate meaningful and effective participation of stakeholders in adaptive management of protected areas.	3 Trends in METT Q26: "Are management activities monitored against performance?" 4 Trends in METT Q7a: "The planning process allows adequate opportunity for key

[10] The numbering of the priority actions does not imply ranking/ordering by priority. Priority actions include applied research, studies and experimentation, as well as real measures (pilot and community-based actions, awareness raising, and capacity building).

[11] The questions referred to in this column are those of the 2007 version of the METT (version 3) and the additional questions of the Advanced METT (KfW version), and will take precedence over the METT 4 version (2021) where some questions are stated differently, lumped together, split in two or have different numbering.

	which they were established and achieve their specific goals and objectives	1.2.2	Facilitate meaningful and effective participation of stakeholders in participatory management effectiveness assessments of protected areas (e.g., using METT).	stakeholders to influence the management plan". 5 Trends in METT Q21: "Does land and water use planning recognise the protected area and aid the achievement of objectives?".
		1.2.3	Support Environmental Actors to engage in advocacy and outreach for the benefit of protected areas.	
		1.2.4	Encourage feed-back from civil society groups and the media on protected area management performance.	
		1.2.5	Help address communication gaps between local communities and stakeholders and protected area managers.	
		1.2.6	Help communicate and build understanding and acceptance among societal actors of the types and levels of permitted activities in the protected areas.	
		1.2.7	Harness the skill and enthusiasm of volunteers through citizen science, and other programs to carry out needed management activities.	
		1.2.8	Facilitate information sharing between Environmental Actors regarding protected area management at site and transboundary level.	
		1.2.9	Build capacity among civil society organization for effective participation in Environmental and Social Impact Assessment procedures.	
		1.2.10	Promote the implementation of *Natura 2000* requirements for the sites within the PONT Focus Region.	
		1.2.11	Foster partnerships with CSOs and local community members to monitor and patrol protected areas.	
		1.2.12	Support Environmental Actors in monitoring the implementation of obligations and requirements from the international agreements regarding the protected areas in the PONT Focus Region.	
		1.2.13	Help Environmental Actors improve organizational capacity and technical skills on nature protection issues.	

UNDERSTANDING AND CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY **Strategic Objective 2: The major biodiversity values and associated ecosystem services in the PONT Focus Region are resilient, restored and maintained in the long-term**	Objective 2.1: The major natural values in the PONT Focus Region and associated ecosystem services are clearly identified and understood, including the threats they face.	2.1.1	Support long-term partnerships between protected area authorities and Environmental Actors in environmental monitoring.	6 Trends in Advanced METT Additional Question 1: "Is the protected area consciously managed to adapt to climate change?" 7 Trends in Advanced METT Additional Question 2: "Are the threats to the main values of the protected area identified, classified and addressed?" 8 Trends in METT Q30: "What is the condition of the important values of the protected area as compared to when it was first designated?" 9 Trends in METT Q30a: "The assessment of the condition of values is based on research and/or monitoring."
		2.1.2	Support Environmental actors' contribution in identifying, understanding, and documenting the location, extent, and severity of threats to major values of protected areas.	
		2.1.3	Support Environmental actors in complementing the monitoring efforts by protected area authorities and research institutes.	
		2.1.4	Support participatory monitoring by local volunteers and community groups to complement monitoring efforts by protected area authorities, research institutes and Environmental Actors.	
		2.1.5	Support the development of capacity and skills for citizen science data recording and reporting threats to major values of protected areas.	
		2.1.6	Increase the awareness among social actors of values and benefits of protected area and the threats they face.	
		2.1.7	Support Environmental Actors to complement environmental education efforts by protected area authorities.	
		2.1.8	Support Environmental Actors' contribution in assessing, understanding, documenting, and mitigating impacts of climate change on the major values of protected areas.	
		2.1.9	Support the promotion and awareness raising about World Heritage natural values and the associated cultural values in the PONT Focus Region.	
	Objective 2.2: Targeted conservation actions lead to the recovery of species as well as restoration and	2.2.1	Support Environmental Actors' contribution to complement species and habitat restoration efforts by protected area authorities.	10 Trends in METT Q30b: "Specific management programmes are being implemented to address threats to biodiversity, ecological and cultural values".
		2.2.2	Support Environmental Actors in undertaking ecological restoration actions around protected areas.	

	resilience of habitats and ecosystems	2.2.3 2.2.4	Support Environmental Actors in improving ecological connectivity among protected areas at local and transboundary levels. Support the involvement of local communities and stakeholders in active management and habitat restoration in protected areas and ecological corridors.	11 Trends in Advanced METT Additional Question 3: "Has the status of key indicator species changed over the last 5 years?" 12 Trends in Advanced METT Additional Question 3: "Has the status of habitats changed over the last 5 years?"
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT **Strategic Objective 3: Sustainable uses of natural resources in the PONT Focus Region are compatible with protected area management goals and objectives[12]**	Objective 3.1: Natural resource uses around no-take zones are compatible with and support the attainment of the conservation goals and objectives of the protected areas	3.1.1 3.1.2 3.1.3	Promote traditional resource uses that are compatible with and contribute to conservation objectives in protected areas. Support Environmental actors in contributing to better understanding of the social and economic benefits as well as restrictions associated with protected area management. Support Environmental actors in measuring the flow of benefits from protected areas to different stakeholders.	13 Trends in METT Q25: "Is the protected area providing economic benefits to local communities, e.g., income, employment, payment for environmental services?"
	Objective 3.2: The nature and level of tourism and visitor activities are consistent with the primary conservation objectives of the protected areas	3.2.1 3.2.2 3.2.3 3.2.4	Promote the establishment of long-term partnerships between Environmental Actors and protected area authorities to improve tourism and visitor management in protected area. Develop the capacity of local communities to deliver tourism services and ensure that adequate business modelling has been completed before investments. Support community-based provision of tourism services that is market related. Promote recreational activities in protected areas that help meet community needs and address larger societal goals related to human health and well-being.	14 Trends in METT Q27: "Are visitor facilities adequate?"; baseline value to be established. 15 Trends in METT Q28: "Do commercial tour operators contribute to protected area management?" 16 Trends in METT Q28: "If fees (i.e., entry fees or fines) are applied, do they help protected area management?"

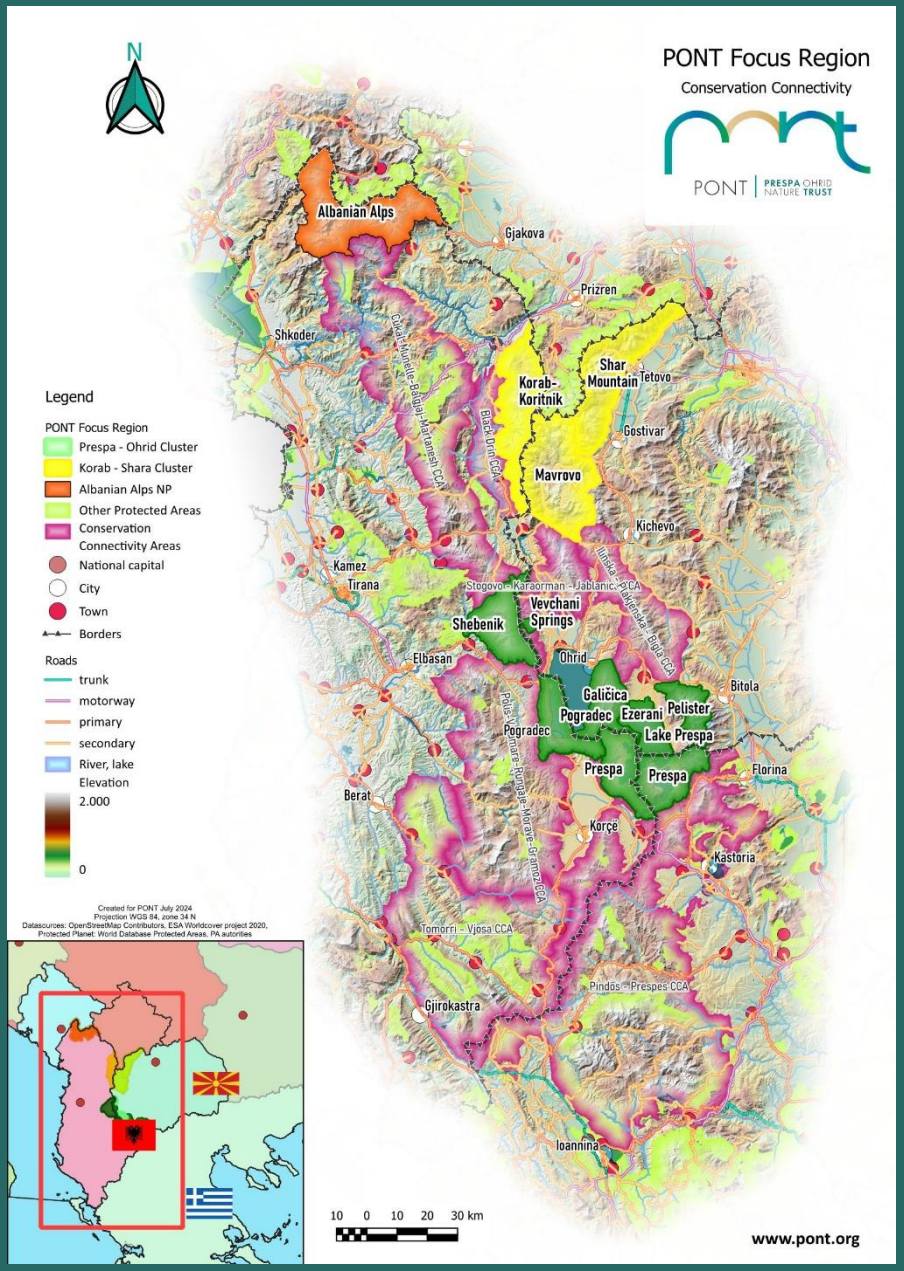
[12] As per its charter, PONT financing focuses on sustainable uses of natural resources directly linked and compatible to protected areas such as nature-based tourism and non-timber forest products. Activities such as the promotion of agriculture, commercial fisheries or commercial forestry are not eligible for PONT co-financing. Sustainable development activities and investments in waste collection; supply of drinking water and wastewater treatment are also not eligible for PONT co-financing. PONT recognises the importance of other rural development activities and seeks to collaborate with other donors and projects supporting such activities.

		3.2.5 Support community-based projects for visitor safety and rescue. 3.2.6 Support Environmental Actors in complementing the efforts of protected area authorities on visitor impact monitoring.	

Pillar 3: Overarching People with Nature Objective as a crosscutting principle for all PONT grants

RESILIENT PEOPLE–NATURE SYSTEMS **Strategic Objective 4: Healthy ecosystems, capable institutions, and empowered communities reinforce one another so that conservation outcomes and locally valued benefits are sustained over time.**	Objective 4.1: Communities, institutions, and ecosystems have the relationships, capacities, knowledge, and resources needed to anticipate change, respond collectively, and sustain conservation outcomes.	4.1.1 Recognise and strengthen meaningful community stewardship roles in governance, implementation, and monitoring. 4.1.2 Support locally led conservation solutions, including community monitoring and restoration roles. 4.1.3 Assess and improve the fair distribution of conservation benefits and costs. 4.1.4 Integrate local knowledge with scientific evidence in adaptive management.	17 Level of community influence over conservation decisions. 18 Diversity and meaningful participation of local actors, including women, youth, and vulnerable groups. 19 Number and quality of stewardship arrangements. 20 Local knowledge incorporated into management or monitoring.
	Objective 4.2: Successful approaches are consolidated, institutionalised, and maintained before PONT support is reduced.	4.2.1 Prepare consolidation and maintenance plans identifying ownership, capacities, recurrent costs, financing, and risks. 4.2.2 Institutionalise successful practices in protected area, municipal, organisational, community, or business plans and budgets. 4.2.3 Diversify financing for essential conservation functions and partnerships. 4.2.4 Facilitate learning, replication, and continued light-touch support where justified.	21 Proportion of essential functions with an identified owner, required capacity, and viable financing. 22 Evidence that ecological results and locally valued benefits are maintained during the transition period when PONT gradually reduces its support. 23 Stakeholder trust and perceived ability to respond collectively to shocks and change.

PONT
PRESPA OHRID
NATURE TRUST


PONT Focus Region
Conservation Connectivity
PONT | PRESPA OHRID NATURE TRUST
N
Legend
PONT Focus Region
Prespa - Ohrid Cluster
Korab - Shara Cluster
Albanian Alps NP
Other Protected Areas
Conservation Connectivity Areas
National capital
City
Town
Borders
Roads
trunk
motorway
primary
secondary
River, lake
Elevation
2.000
0
Albanian Alps
Gjakova
Prizren
Shkoder
Shar Mountain
Tetovo
Korab-Koritnik
Gostivar
Mavrovo
Kichevo
Kamez
Tirana
Shebenik
Vevchani Springs
Elbasan
Ohrid
Bitola
Galičica
Pogradec
Ezerani
Pelister
Lake Prespa
Prespa
Florina
Berat
Korçë
Kastoria
Gjirokastra
Ioannina
Created for PONT July 2024
Projection WGS 84, zone 34 N
Datasources: OpenStreetMap Contributors, ESA Worldcover project 2020, Protected Planet: World Database Protected Areas, PA autorities
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